



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY RECRUITING BATTALION ALBANY  
21 AVIATION ROAD  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12205-1131

March 10, 2003

Office of the Commander

To the family members of the Albany Eagles:

The safety of all family members and soldiers is my utmost concern. Recently, the drug ephedra has become a topic of concern in the news. Within the past two years, the deaths of several professional and college athletes have been associated with the use of ephedra. As military members, we participate in physical activities on a routine basis; some of our soldiers even use ephedra. It is important that all of us understand the potential dangers caused by this drug.

Ephedra is also known as the Chinese herb "Ma huang." It is frequently used in weight loss preparations and in supplements sold to boost energy and build muscle. The use of products containing ephedra have been linked to adverse reactions including dizziness, nervousness, rapid heartbeat, and stroke. The effects of ephedrine products can be very serious, and fatal. Some victims of ephedra, who had only taken ephedrine pills for a week, have even experienced respiratory failure and heart failure while hospitalized. Although ephedra use alone might not be dangerous, strenuous exercise combined with ephedra may have hazardous effects on an individual.

Since 1994 the FDA has expressed concern about ephedrine products. The FDA has received an increased number of reports of adverse reactions associated with ephedra use. Because these products are frequently marketed as dietary supplements, there is little or no premarket review by the FDA of their safety or effectiveness.

In order to learn more about ephedra, you may view the following website: [www.cfsan.fda.gov](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov). This website contains important information about ephedra products and what the government is doing to improve its safety. I encourage you to view the website.

Once again, the safety and well being of all members of the Albany Recruiting Battalion Family is my primary concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher P. Costa", is written over a horizontal line.

Christopher P. Costa  
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army  
Commanding